

BRIDGNORTH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1955.



Bridgmont R.D.C. M.O.H. Report 1955

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BRIDGNORTH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

Medical Officer of Health:

MARGARET H.F. TURNBULL, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Senior Sanitary Inspector:

S.J. YELLAND, A.R.I.C.S., Cert.S.I.B.

Additional Sanitary Inspector:

D.A. PAMPHILON, Cert.S.I.B., M.S.I.A.

Second Additional Sanitary Inspector:

J. STOCKER, Cert.S.I.B., M.S.I.A.

(as from 26th September, 1955)

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BRIDGNORTH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Westgate,
Bridgnorth.

September, 1956.

To the Chairman and Councillors:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on matters relating to health and environmental hygiene in your district, for the year 1955.

The Vital Statistics are all quite satisfactory, the Birth-Rate, Still-Birth Rate and Death-Rate being very similar to those of 1954. There is a slight increase in the Infant Mortality Rate for 1955 as compared with that of the previous year, but the figure is well below the corresponding value for England and Wales for 1955.

The number of notifications of cases of Infectious Disease is almost the same as that for 1954, and there were no serious outbreaks of infection, though Measles was prevalent among the children in the second quarter of the year.

Pipe-laying in the first stage of the Low Level Water Supply Scheme was well advanced and nearing completion by the end of the year. The majority of the areas to be served by this stage of the scheme, however, cannot receive water until the completion of the Bagginswood Reservoir, in the construction of which some delay occurred. Work commenced on Stage II of the scheme in April and satisfactory progress was made.

There is nothing fresh to report regarding the Joint High Level Water Supply Scheme, no real progress having been made towards its initiation.

Work on the new sewerage system and sewage-disposal plant for Highley commenced during the year, and progressed very favourably. The existing disposal works at New England and Wren's Nest continue to deteriorate, and the former will certainly have to be replaced in Stage II of the Scheme or undergo radical repairs. As a result of a Public Enquiry held on the 17th May, 1955 the approval of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was given to the proposed sewerage and sewage-disposal scheme for Eardington.

Sanitary conditions in Alveley have grown steadily worse during the year, and will continue to deteriorate as more new houses are built and more of the older houses acquire piped-water supplies. Every effort should be made to expedite the provision of sewers and a sewage-disposal plant for this area.

Good progress was made in the Council's housing programme during the year. 39 new houses were completed as compared with 12 in 1954, and a further 64 were in course of construction on the new Rhea Hall housing estate at Highley at the end of the year. Only 17 private houses were completed, as compared with 27 in 1954, but a further 20 were in course of construction by 31st December.

There was a marked increase in the number of persons applying for Improvement Grants to assist in the modernisation of their houses during 1955, and the Council was able to approve 40 applications, as compared with 19 in 1954. 20 improvement schemes were completed during the year, as compared with 9 in 1954. Since the inception of the Improvement Grants Scheme, 73 applications in this district have been approved, and 29 approved schemes have been completed.

Mr. J. Stocker joined the Public Health Staff on 26th September, 1955 as Second Additional Sanitary Inspector, his duties being mainly in connection with a housing survey of the district, which was deemed necessary to provide up-to-date information for the Council's slum clearance programme. Recent Public Health legislation has had the effect of increasing greatly the work of the Sanitary Inspectors, who already faced a very full programme, and the Rat Destruction Service for agricultural premises, operated by the Council since June 1955, has added to their many duties. The addition of another member of staff was therefore very necessary if the work of the department was to be carried out efficiently.

I should like to express my appreciation and thanks to Mr. S.J. Yelland, Mr. D.A. Pamphilon and Mr. J. Stocker for their valuable assistance in the preparation of Sections C. D. and E. of this Report.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

MARGARET H.F. TURNBULL,

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of District in acres	100,897
Estimated Population (Mid - 1955)	16,100
Number of Inhabited Houses	3,890
Rateable Value of the District (at 1st April 1956)	£155,282
Estimated Product of ld. Rate	£614

VITAL STATISTICS

<u>LIVE BIRTHS</u>		<u>1955</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>
Legitimate	(Male	104	118	119
	(Female	118	105	105
	(Total	222	223	224
	(Rate per 1,000 of population	13.8	13.8	13.5
Illegitimate	(Male	3	4	0
	(Female	7	2	10
	(Total	10	6	10
	(Rate per 1,000 of population	0.62	0.37	0.60
Total	(Male	107	122	119
	(Female	125	107	115
	(Total	232	229	234
	(Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 of population	14.4	14.2	14.1
	(Standardised Rate per 1,000 of population	17.9	17.6	19.8
<u>STILL-BIRTHS</u>				
	(Male	3	0	2
	(Female	1	4	2
	(Total	4	4	4
	(Still-Birth Rate per 1,000 live plus still-births	16.9	17.2	16.7
<u>DEATHS</u>				
	(Male	66	63	67
	(Female	58	58	63
	(Total	124	121	130
	(Crude Death Rate per 1,000 of population	7.7	7.5	7.9
	(Standardised Rate per 1,000 of population	9.1	8.9	9.3
<u>DEATHS RELATED TO PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH</u>				
	(Total	0	1	1
	(Maternal Mortality Rate per 1,000 total births	Nil	4.3	4.2
<u>DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE</u>				
Legitimate	(Male	2	2	5
	(Female	2	1	1
	(Total	4	3	6
	(Rate per 1,000 legitimate live-births	18.0	13.0	26.8

<u>DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE</u>		<u>1955</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>
Illegitimate	(Male	0	0	0
	(Female	0	0	0
	(Total	0	0	0
	(Rate per 1,000 illegitimate live-births	0	0	0
Total	(Male	2	2	5
	(Female	2	1	1
	(Total	4	3	6
	(Rate per 1,000 total live-births	17.2	13.1	25.5

DEATHS FROM:

Cancer (all sites)	24
Measles	0
Whooping-cough	0
Diphtheria	0
Tuberculosis	0

RATES FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1955

Birth-Rate per 1,000 of population	15.0
Still Birth-Rate per 1,000 live + still-births	23.1
Death-Rate per 1,000 of population	11.7
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live-births	24.9

NOTES ON VITAL STATISTICS

POPULATION

The Registrar-General's estimated mid-year population for the district for 1955 was 16,100 a decrease of 80 on the estimate for 1954. This figure (which includes members of the Armed Forces stationed in the area) is used in the calculation of the Birth and Death-Rates.

BIRTHS

During the year there were 232 live births in the district, 3 more than in 1954. Of these 232, 10 were illegitimate.

The Crude Birth-Rate per 1,000 of the population was thus 14.4 (14.2 in 1954) and the Standardised Birth-Rate, with which comparisons with rates for other areas, and with that for England and Wales may be made, was 17.9. The Birth-Rate for England and Wales for 1955 was 15.0 per 1,000 of the population.

STILL-BIRTHS

There were 4 Still-births in the district during the year, the same number as in the previous two years. The Still-Birth Rate per 1,000 live plus still-births was 16.9, the corresponding rate for England and Wales being 23.1.

DEATHS

124 persons died in the district during 1955 (66 males and 58 females) which is 3 more than during the previous year. The Crude Death-Rate per 1,000 of the population was therefore 7.7, and the Standardised Death-Rate was 9.1. The Death-Rate for England and Wales for 1955 was 11.7 per 1,000 of the population.

Causes of Death

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Diseases of the Heart and Circulation	36	14	50
Cancer (all sites)	11	13	24
Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System	7	10	17
Accidents (excluding motor vehicle accidents)	2	3	5
Pneumonia	0	3	3
Bronchitis	0	3	3
Accidents (motor vehicles)	1	1	2
Influenza	1	1	2
Suicide	2	0	2
Diabetes	0	1	1
All other causes	6	9	15
	<u>66</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>124</u>

Diseases of the Heart and Circulation, as in recent years, accounted for the greatest number of deaths - 40.3% of the total, as compared with 31.4% in 1954.

Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System accounted for 17 deaths, i.e. 13.7% of the total number, as compared with 20.7% in 1954.

Cancer was responsible for 24 deaths, as compared with 22 in 1954, (19.4% of the total as compared with 18.2%). Of these 24 deaths, 3 were due to cancer of the lung or bronchus, which caused 6 deaths in 1954. The Cancer Death-Rate per 1,000 of the population was 1., an increase of 0.14 on the figure for 1954.

There were no deaths from Respiratory Tuberculosis in the district during 1955.

INFANT MORTALITY

Four infants died during 1955 before reaching the age of 1 year; two of the four died under the age of 4 weeks. There were 3 infant deaths in 1954. The Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births was 17.2, the rate for 1954 having been 13.1. The Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales for 1955 was 24.9 per 1,000 live births.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

There were no deaths related to pregnancy or childbirth during the year.

NATURAL INCREASE OF POPULATION

The number of births exceeded the number of deaths by 108, the same figure as for 1954.

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

STAFF

The names and professional qualifications of the Public Health Officers of the Authority are given at the beginning of the Report. During the year it became clear that the addition of another Sanitary Inspector to the staff would be necessary, if the Authority was to carry out faithfully the duties imposed upon it by recent legislation, such as that relating to Housing and Meat Inspection, and the further duties which would certainly arise when the new Food and Drugs Act came into force. Accordingly, Mr. J. Stocker was appointed to the post of Second Additional Sanitary Inspector, and commenced duty on 26th September 1955. There were no other staff changes during the year.

LABORATORY FACILITIES

Use continued to be made during the year of the facilities provided by the Public Health Laboratory Service at the Royal Salop Infirmary, Shrewsbury, for the bacteriological examination of samples of water, milk and ice cream. The specimens submitted were 76 samples of water, 5 samples of ice cream and 1 sample of raw milk.

HOSPITAL AND SPECIALIST SERVICES

The provision of hospital accommodation and specialist services in this area is the responsibility of Birmingham Regional Hospital Board. No changes occurred during the year in the hospital facilities available for the area. The hospitals most easily accessible to those living in the Rural District are those at Bridgnorth, Kidderminster, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury.

Cases of Infectious Disease requiring isolation and hospital treatment are admitted to the Borough Hospital, Wolverhampton, or to Monkmoor Hospital, Shrewsbury.

Patients with Tuberculosis receive treatment at Shirlett Sanatorium or at Sanatoria at Knightwick, Malvern or Prees Heath.

The chronic sick requiring hospital admission receive treatment at Shifnal Hospital.

Innage House, Bridgnorth is a home for old persons in need of residential care and attention and is administered by Salop County Council in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the National Assistance Act, 1948.

LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY SERVICES

In accordance with Part III of the National Health Service Act, 1946 Salop County Council as Local Health Authority is responsible for and administers the following services in the area:-

- (a) Health Centres.
- (b) Care of mothers and young children.
- (c) Domiciliary Midwifery.
- (d) Health Visiting.
- (e) Home Nursing.
- (f) Vaccination and Immunisation.
- (g) Ambulance Services.
- (h) Prevention of illness, care and after-care.
- (i) Domestic Help Service.

The arrangements which have been made for the operation of some of those services in the district are as follows:-

CHILD WELFARE CLINICS

(1) HIGHLEY.

Until 18th October, 1955, the Child Welfare Clinic was held in the Miners' Welfare Hall Annexe, Highley, every Tuesday from 1.30 - 4.30 p.m., but since then, sessions have been held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday afternoons in each month only.

(2) ALVELEY.

The Child Welfare Clinic at Alveley opened at the old school, Church Green, Alveley, on 25th October, 1955, and is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday afternoons in each month from 1.30 - 4.30 p.m.

Expectant mothers also attend at these clinics for routine examination and advice.

Attendances of babies at Highley Clinic remained quite satisfactory during the year, but up to the end of the year very few mothers had availed themselves of the facilities provided at Alveley. It is to be hoped that attendances at this clinic will improve in the future, as it was in response to local demand and interest that representation was made in 1954 to the County Medical Officer of Health recommending the institution of regular clinic sessions in Alveley.

For those within easy reach of Bridgnorth there is also a Child Welfare Clinic held at the Welfare Centre, Northgate, every Monday from 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 - 4.30 p.m.

WELFARE FOODS

The National Welfare Foods (National Dried Milk, Orange Juice, Cod-liver Oil and Vitamin A and D Tablets) are available at the Child Welfare Centres during clinic hours, and at various conveniently situated distribution points throughout the district.

HEALTH VISITING, HOME NURSING AND DOMICILIARY MIDWIFERY SERVICES

Details of these services in the area may be obtained from the Annual Report for the year of the County Medical Officer of Health.

VACCINATION AND IMMUNISATION

Under the County Council's scheme, vaccination against small-pox and immunisation against diphtheria may be carried out by arrangement with a general practitioner or at any of the Child Welfare Centres.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

The Central Ambulance Depot for the County is in Shrewsbury (Tel No. Shrewsbury 6331) to which all requests for an ambulance should be made. Two ambulances and a car for sitting-cases are stationed in Bridgnorth for use on local journeys.

DOMESTIC HELP SERVICE

The service of a domestic help is available, in the words of the Act, for "any person who is ill, an expectant mother, mentally defective, aged, or a child not over compulsory school age." Enquiries regarding this service are dealt with at Bridgnorth Welfare Centre on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 2.15 and 4.30 p.m.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

WATER SUPPLIES

COMPREHENSIVE SCHEMES

1. High Level Areas.

Again this year there is virtually no progress to report in connection with this scheme. One or two meetings with Ludlow Rural District Council have been held, but little appears to have been achieved.

2. Low Level Scheme.

By the end of the year, main-laying in the first stage of this scheme was well-advanced and nearing completion, and it was hoped that water would be available early in 1956 in some of the areas to be served by the scheme. Until the reservoir at Bagginswood is completed however, the greater part of the scheme cannot be put into operation. Some lengths of pipe-line in the parish of Chelmarsh have already been handed over by the engineers. These have been sterilised and some new house connections made.

Work on the second stage of the scheme was commenced in April, and good progress has been made. The construction of the elevated water-tower at Tasley is in hand and there should be no delays in connection with this.

Tenders for the third stage have been invited and it is hoped that work will commence early in 1956.

On the whole, the past year has been notable for the progress which has been made in the Council's water supply schemes, but nevertheless there still remains much to be done.

PARISH REPORTS.

1. Parish of Stottesdon.

For the greater part of the year this parish has been supplied as hitherto. Towards the end of November, however, a breakdown in the supply occurred, and emergency measures had to be taken. It was found possible to supply the village by means of an emergency pipeline taken from the inlet to the Bagginswood Reservoir. This proved to be so successful that the local source is now to be used for emergency purposes only.

2. Parishes of Claverley and Worfield.

Very few areas in either of these parishes remain to be supplied. Water has now been piped to the main centres of population. During the past year more of the local inhabitants have connected to the public supply, a tendency to be encouraged very strongly.

3. Parish of Alveley.

There is nothing further to report in connection with the water supplies to this parish. The more densely-populated part is served by the Low Level Scheme, but there are many localities still in urgent need of a piped supply, especially in the Lane Green and Tuck Hill areas. It is expected that it will be about three years before the existing pipelines can be extended.

Details of premises supplied with water from public piped supplies are as follows:-

	<u>No. of Premises</u>		<u>Percentage of Parish</u>
	<u>Direct</u>	<u>Standpipe</u>	
Alveley	159	12	58.75
Astley Abbotts	14	-	10.25
Chelmarsh	19	1	14.0
Claverley	221	-	59.0
Highley	577	-	94.5
Kinlet	69	-	48.5
Stottesdon	49	-	18.9
Tasley	45	-	83.8
Neen Savage	30	-	30.0
Worfield			
Civilian	167)		
R.A.F. Houses	180)	348	83.3
R.A.F. Camp	1)		

The remainder of the district is supplied by wells, springs, etc. and in some cases private piped supplies.

PURITY OF SUPPLIES

The water supplies in the district come into two categories, (1) water supplied from mains belonging to Wolverhampton, Bridgnorth and Birmingham Corporations, and (2) water from boreholes, wells and springs in the district.

The main piped supplies are chlorinated prior to reaching the district. The Birmingham supply feeds the Low Level Scheme, and at points on the Elan Aqueduct where water is supplied to the scheme, the water is again chlorinated by the Council. It may therefore be assumed that in the mains supplies the water is bacteriologically pure. Regular samples are taken from these supplies, however, as a necessary precaution to safeguard the Public Health.

Some mention must be made in dealing with this subject to the work done by the Public Health Laboratory Service, to which the samples are submitted for bacteriological examination. The help and advice received is much appreciated.

Routine sampling of the chlorinated supplies have shown the following results:-

<u>Highly satisfactory</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
19	9	5

The value of the policy of regular sampling is shown in these figures, for on one occasion the open reservoir at Highley was found to be causing slight pollution. The reservoir was washed out and chlorinated and since that date no further trouble has been experienced. The possibility of pollution remains, however, where an open reservoir is used, and some consideration should be given to covering this reservoir in the future.

Unfortunately the purity of water from other sources in the district is not so satisfactory owing to contamination in one form or another, and many problems arise when dealing with these supplies. The services of the Health Department are at the disposal of people using such water, and much useful work is done, and advice given in this respect.

21 samples have been taken during the year from private supplies, and the fact that only 4 of the samples can be classed as satisfactory shows that the purity of non-chlorinated water supplies in the district leaves a lot to be desired.

It is seldom; however, that any illness is caused in those who regularly consume this impure water. It seems that a natural immunity to the organisms present is developed by the consumers. In a few instances, however, it has been brought to our notice that persons who have come to live in the district and who have been accustomed to drinking chlorinated water have very soon suffered from gastro-intestinal upsets.

Every effort is made to trace the source of contamination when a bad sample has been obtained, but sometimes pollution continues to occur after all obvious defects have been remedied. In such cases, the Notices advising users to boil all water before consumption have to remain in force more or less indefinitely, if an alternative and a purer water supply cannot easily be obtained.

In the case of schools in the area where the water supply is unsatisfactory, drinking-water is supplied in churns and delivered with the school meals each day.

Following a mild outbreak of sickness and diarrhoea in October among the children attending Morville School, the water there was sampled and found to be very unsatisfactory. It was found that the School could very easily be connected to the mains supplying the Morville Council Houses, the pipes having been laid some years before with this object in view. The Education Authority accordingly made the necessary connections. It was, of course, by no means certain that the water was to blame for the illness, and the cause was not definitely ascertained.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

During the year under review, work on the new sewers and sewage disposal plant at Highley was commenced. At the time of writing this report the new sewers have been completed and considerable progress has been made on the site of the intended disposal works. A temporary storm-overflow weir has been provided, which has relieved, to some extent, the pressure on the existing works at Wren's Nest, but in spite of all efforts these continue to become less efficient. The same remarks apply to the old works at New England. Without question, these must either be replaced in Stage II of the new scheme, or radical repairs undertaken.

It is disappointing to report that no work had by December been started at Claverley. The need is still no less urgent on health grounds than it was in time of greater prosperity. The matter is, however, in hand, and it is hoped that the scheme will be commenced during 1956.

Sanitary conditions in the parish of Alveley grow steadily worse. More people are using piped-water, and private housing development is increasing, all without main drainage. The Council should be deeply concerned at the present position, and every effort should be made to ensure that sewers and a sewage disposal plant are provided at the earliest possible date.

After a Public Enquiry, approval was given by the Minister of Housing and Local Government to the scheme proposed for the village of Eardington. To date little progress seems to have been made, however, presumably on account of considerations of finance over-riding those of health.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

No changes in the methods or routes of collection have been made since the last report, and the system appears to operate quite smoothly.

The present tip at Highley has been closed, and completely covered to a depth of two feet or more, with material excavated from the site of the new sewage disposal works on adjoining land. Fortunately a new tipping site has been obtained adjoining the old tip, and this should provide space for disposal for several years.

A serious fire at the tip at Alveley has made it necessary to convey all refuse collected on the east side of the River Severn to Claverley, and this will have the effect of increasing the cost for some time.

All tips are provided with permanent bait-points for rodent control, and during the summer treatment is given at frequent intervals to prevent nuisance from flies.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

There are 21 factories on the register, all having mechanical power. There are other workshops in the area where rural crafts are still practised, but they do not come within the definition of "Factory" as laid down by the Act. It is significant of the times, however, that farming is becoming a more completely mechanised industry, and the Government accordingly intend to introduce legislation to cover the safety, health and welfare of agricultural workers.

The Inspector reports that 22 visits have been made to factories, five defects having been found.

The advice of the Chief Fire Officer, Salop County Council, has been sought in all cases before the issue of a "Means of escape in case of fire" certificate. This practice will be continued in the future, as it is felt that more use should be made of the Fire Service's experience in fire prevention.

CAMPING SITES

The 10 licensed camping-sites in the district have received regular visits. In only one instance was it found necessary to bring the owner's attention to the untidy condition of the site.

The problem of the individual caravan still remains, with its attendant difficulties of control. In order to try to obviate this problem, an existing licensed-site is to be enlarged, to provide accommodation for 100 caravans. This site will then have sanitary accommodation blocks and a piped water supply.

RODENT CONTROL

The duties imposed on the Council by the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949 require that all premises within the area be inspected. This work is systematically carried out by an experienced rodent operative who treats infestations as they are found.

In addition to this work, the Council carry out a rat destruction service at farm premises. This contract service was formerly conducted by the Shropshire Agricultural Executive Committee, and was transferred at the Council's request in June. The service now forms an integral part of the rodent control service, enabling contracts to be offered to farmers when the routine inspection is made.

The following table shows the inspections of property made and infestations discovered and treated during the last 12 months.

Type of Property	Inspections Made	Infestations Discovered	Infestations Notified	Treatments Carried Out
Local Authority (Sewage Works, Tips, etc.)	57	26	2	29
Dwellings	3320	436	8	430
Trade	104	18	1	18
Agricultural	902	170	-	58

INSPECTIONS FOR THE YEAR 1955

A total of 1,862 visits and inspections have been made during the year, an increase of 895 on the total for 1954. A quarter of these are visits to slaughterhouses on meat inspection duties. The remainder are more or less evenly distributed among the routine duties of a Sanitary Inspector, except for the emphasis on farm inspections as a result of the rat destruction service carried out by the Council, since the month of June.

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Houses - Public Health Acts	87
Houses - Housing Acts	127
Housing applications investigated	101
Complaints investigated	87
Water - General	59
Water - Samples	55
Factories	20
Camping Sites	29
Infectious Disease Cases	29
Swimming Baths	14
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act - Domestic, Trade, etc.	53
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act - Farm Contracts	148
Interviews with owners	22
Revisits to Property under Notice	59
Licensed Premises	7
Bakehouses	5
Fried Fish Shops	6
Food Premises	60
Butchers Shops	7
Slaughterhouses	444
Drainage	294
Problem Families	15
Miscellaneous	134
	<u>1,862</u>

Number of Notices served under Public Health Act, 1936.

(a) Informal	-	14
(b) Formal	-	3

SECTION D.

HOUSING

	<u>1955</u>	<u>1954</u>
Number of inhabited houses	3,890	3,795
Number of houses owned by the Council	352	314
Number of houses completed in 1955:		
(a) Council	39	
(b) Private	17	39
Number of applications for houses at 31/12/55...	233	300
Number of houses under construction at 31/12/55:		
(a) Council	64	
(b) Private	20	52

Included in the figure of the houses owned by the Council are the temporary hutments at Coton Camp, now reduced to four, and two hostels taken over from the Ministry of Works and converted into flats.

The huts at Coton are rapidly deteriorating, having served for a period far in excess of their expected life, and the tenants should be re-housed as soon as circumstances permit.

NEW HOUSES

There has been a marked improvement in the rate of completion of new houses during the past year. 39 new houses have been occupied as compared with 12 in the previous year. The number under construction at the end of December was 64, all these being on the new Rhea Hall Estate at Highley, and whilst it is not anticipated that the whole of this number will be finished during the coming year, at least the Council can hope to maintain the present rate of building.

Fewer private houses were completed than in the last year, 17 as compared with 27. This was probably due to increased difficulty in borrowing, and higher interest rates. What the future will hold is a matter for conjecture, but the signs are that the present rate of building should be maintained.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

At present the tendency of the Council appears to be to await events before committing themselves to a definite programme of new building. Several schemes are under consideration, but these are hardly beyond the paper stage.

HOUSING APPLICATIONS 1955

Total number of outstanding applications in 1955	-	233
Number of persons on list applying for houses and not residing within the district	-	63
Number of applicants living in lodgings	-	68
Number of applicants requiring houses in Highley	-	39

Details of Post-War building are as follows:-

Parish	Under Construction at 31/12/55.	Completed in year ending 31/12/55.	Total Completed Post-War.
Alveley	-	-	50
Claverley	-	-	26
Worfield	-	7	45
Tasley	-	-	6
Morville	-	-	18*
Shipton	-	-	6
Highley	64	-	56
Kinlot	-	-	14
Neen Savage	-	-	10
Stottesdon	-	-	15*
Eudon George	-	-	6
Ditton Priors	-	20	20
Monkhopton	-	6	14
Chetton	-	6	6
	<hr/> 64	<hr/> 39	<hr/> 292
Highley	Pre-War Houses		<hr/> 56
	Total of all houses		<hr/> <hr/> 348

(* Includes hostel converted into flats)

PRIVATE BUILDINGS

Under Construction at 31/12/55.	Completed During 1955.	Total Post-War.
20	17	101

UNFIT HOUSES

Work has now commenced in making a detailed inspection of most of the houses in the Council's area. The Rural Housing Survey carried out in the immediate Post-War years is being used as the basis of the new work. In September the Council appointed Mr. J. Stocker as Second Additional Sanitary Inspector to deal principally with the housing survey and this appointment has greatly improved the staff situation.

Whilst day to day complaints are attended to, the method of operation adopted is to carry out the work parish by parish, dealing first with those areas where housing accommodation is likely to become available in the fairly near future.

IMPROVEMENT AND RECONDITIONING

Again this year it is pleasing to be able to report that many people are taking advantage of Improvement Grants. Schemes of all descriptions have been submitted and approved and some truly remarkable results have been obtained. In this field, at least, the Council may feel some pride of achievement.

Details of the scheme as operated by the Council are as follows:-

Total number of applications considered	-	83
Total number of applications approved	-	73
Number approved in 1955	-	40
Number completed in 1955	-	20
Total number completed	-	29

SECTION E.

INSPECTION OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

There are 5 licensed slaughterhouses in the district, a reduction of 1 in the number first licensed when private slaughtering was recommenced in 1954. This licence was revoked, as the occupier of the slaughterhouse failed to comply with a notice requiring works to be carried out, in order to bring the premises up to standard.

There are 11 butchers shops in the district, 6 being served by the private slaughterhouses, the remainder obtaining their meat supplies from centralised slaughterhouses at Wolverhampton and Craven Arms.

It must again be pointed out that the presence of the Inspector during slaughter is seldom possible, and only 50% of animals slaughtered receive ante-mortem inspection.

One slaughterhouse was closed temporarily under the Diseases of Animals Order when an outbreak of Swine Fever was diagnosed by a local veterinary surgeon, and later confirmed by the Ministry of Agriculture. All contacts of the confirmed case were inspected and passed as fit for human consumption.

Carcases inspected and condemned

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	319	11	9	1416	857	Nil
Number inspected	319	11	9	1416	857	Nil
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis.</u>						
Whole carcase condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Carcase of which some part or organ was condemned.	15	Nil	Nil	11	6	Nil
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	4.7%	Nil	Nil	.77%	.70%	Nil
<u>Tuberculosis only.</u>						
Whole carcase condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Carcase of which some part or organ was condemned	9	Nil	Nil	Nil	18	Nil
Percentage of number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	2.81%	Nil	Nil	Nil	2.1%	Nil
<u>Cysticercosis</u>						
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Generalised, and totally condemned	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

The total amount of meat condemned as unfit for human consumption at the slaughterhouses during the year is as follows:-

	cwts.	qtrs.	lbs.
(1) On account of Tuberculosis	3	1	21
(2) On account of other diseases	2	1	3
Total	5	2	24

The foregoing summary of carcasses inspected and condemned again shows the high standard of animals slaughtered in the district.

METHOD OF DISPOSAL OF CONDEMNED FOOD

Condemned foodstuffs are disposed of by deep-burying on the Council's refuse tips. The quantities of meat condemned at the slaughterhouses is comparatively small, and it is hardly worth while for knackers' men to make regular collections. It is therefore found both safe and economical for such meat to be taken by the Meat Inspector to the local hunt kennals, where it is boiled for the hounds.

FOOD INSPECTION

It is an offence under the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 for a retailer of food to have in his possession food which is unfit for human consumption. It is the usual practice for retailers to inform the Inspector of such unfit food. The food is then inspected, and if condemned, a surrender certificate is issued. The following is a summary of foods dealt with in this manner:-

	Lbs.	Ozs.
Corned Beef	12	0
Pork Luncheon Meat	16	11
Stewed Steak	3	12
Vegetables	14 tins.	
Fruit	3 tins.	
Sultanas	5	0

MILK

The supervision of milk production is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and local authorities are responsible only for dairies other than those on farms. The milk supplied in this district is in the main retailed by dairymen from outside the district, and supplementary licences are issued to these retailers after confirmation from the authorities issuing the principal licences has been obtained.

Two instances of a milk supply being infected with Mycobacterium Tuberculosis occurred during the year. In both cases the milk was already being sent to pasteurising plants outside the district, and any risk of the infection being spread was thus eliminated. However, until this district is made a "Specified area", in which it is compulsory for all milk sold to be designated, (i.e. Tuberculin Tested, Pasteurised, or Sterilised) the risk of tuberculous infection remains.

A great deal of criticism has been made throughout the country about the supervision of the production of clean milk, as it is thought by many that it was a retrograde step when this work was taken from local authorities.

The following is a summary of milk licences issued during the year:-

	<u>T.T.</u>	<u>Pasteurised</u>	<u>Sterilised</u>
Supplementary Licences	6	7	4
Dealer's Licences	3	4	6

ICE CREAM

The increasing popularity of ice cream is again shown in the increase of retailers of this commodity in the district, there now being 40 premises where ice cream is sold. In every case the product is pre-wrapped, and no manufacturers of ice cream exist in the district.

Five samples of ice cream were taken during the year, all being classed by the laboratory as Grade I.

The difficulty in submitting samples to the laboratory for bacteriological examination and grading, is that the sample must reach the laboratory within 2 hours of collection. In a large rural area this proves extremely difficult in many cases, as the samples have to be collected and taken by road to Shrewsbury in this period.

FOOD PREMISES

(a) The types of food premises in the area.

1. Butchers shops	11
2. Fried Fish shops	3
3. Bakehouses	4
4. Premises serving snacks and light meals	40
5. Licensed premises	51
6. General provisions	22

(b) Premises registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938

1. Manufacturers of sausages, pressed meat, etc.	7
2. Ice cream dealers	40

FOOD HYGIENE

The fact that not a single complaint of unsatisfactory conditions existing at food premises in the district has been received from the public during the past year, does not give encouragement to the staff of the Health Department. Rather does it point to the complacency and lack of interest in such things shown by the public, for without their help, progress is limited. During the year the number of visits to food premises has increased, and much work of a structural character and of educational value has been carried out.

The introduction of a new Food and Drugs Act and Food Hygiene Regulations to become operative on 1st January, 1956, is designed to consolidate previous legislation, and definite guidance is given as to the standard which must be attained, and maintained in premises where food is handled.

SECTION F.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The notifications of cases of Infectious Disease received from general practitioners during the year were as follows:-

	<u>No. of Cases</u>
Measles	59
Scarlet Fever	10
Acute pneumonia	9
Whooping-cough	8
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	6
Food Poisoning	4
Puerperal Pyrexia	2
Paratyphoid Fever	2
Tuberculosis (Non Respiratory)	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1
	<hr/> 102 <hr/>

The total number of notifications is almost the same as that of the previous year, when 106 cases were notified.

MEASLES

59 cases of measles were notified in 1955, as compared with only 2 in 1954. The highest incidence occurred between April and June, when 43 of the total number were notified. The Kinlet area had the greatest number of cases (12), the remainder being scattered throughout the district. Boys and girls were almost equally affected, the total number comprising 29 males and 30 females, and the 5 - 7 year age-group provided the greatest number of cases. 21 of the total 59 were in this age-group, and pre-school children accounted for 19 of the cases. Only one child under the age of 1 year was affected.

WHOOPING-COUGH

Only 8 cases of Whooping-cough were notified during 1955, as compared with 41 in the previous year. Immunisation against Whooping-cough is now commonly combined with Diphtheria Immunisation in infancy.

SCARLET FEVER

There was again a reduction in the number of notifications of Scarlet Fever in 1955, only 10 being received, as compared with 13 in 1954, 25 in 1953 and 56 in 1952. In previous years, National Service men at the R.A.F. Camp have accounted for about 50% of the cases notified, but in 1955 all the cases were in children, and all but one occurred in Highloy. Scarlet Fever occurs generally in a mild form nowadays, and hospital isolation is seldom necessary.

ACUTE PNEUMONIA

This condition also showed a lower incidence than in recent years, there being 9 notifications, as compared with 32 in 1954 and 36 in 1953. 4 of the cases were National Service men at the R.A.F. Camp. There were 3 deaths from pneumonia during the year.

FOOD POISONING

4 cases of Food Poisoning were notified during the year, one single case in January, and three children in one family who became ill simultaneously in October. The vehicle of infection was not discovered in any of the cases in spite of careful investigation. To be of value, investigations in these cases by the Public Health Staff must be undertaken as early as possible after the condition manifests itself, and immediate notification of cases by general practitioners, by telephone if possible in the first instance, is essential. The patient's family can also help, by saving

for the Inspector any remains of the food under suspicion, for this can then be submitted for bacteriological examination. From the results obtained, it may be possible to trace a "carrier" of dangerous germs who is engaged in food handling, and who should not be so employed. We may thus be able to prevent further food-poisoning outbreaks in the community.

PARATYPHOID FEVER

Two cases of this condition in one family were notified simultaneously from the Claverley area during the summer. One was a proven case, confirmed by laboratory tests, and the other a suspected case, which subsequent tests suggested had actually been infectious. The vehicle of infection was not identified.

DIPHTHERIA

No cases of Diphtheria have occurred in the Rural District for a number of years now, but if its continued absence from the community is to be ensured, it remains essential that all infants and young children should receive protection against it.

The national campaign for the eradication of the disease continues, and remarkable results have already been achieved since its inception. In 1945, in England and Wales, there were 18,596 cases and 722 deaths, and provisional figures for 1955 show 161 cases with 11 deaths. The incidence in 1955 was therefore similar to that of the previous year when there were 173 cases and 9 deaths.

The object of the campaign is to secure the protection of not less than 75% of babies before their first birthday. In 1954 only 36% of children in England and Wales were immunised under the age of 12 months, and 38.4% during the first half of 1955.

In the Rural District in 1955, 132 babies were immunised during their first year of life - approximately 58% of those eligible for this protection. This represents a great improvement on the comparable figure of 32% for 1954. It still falls far short of the desired 75% however, and the efforts of all concerned, towards the attainment of this target in the future, must not be relaxed.

It is desirable also that primary immunisation in infancy should be followed by "booster" injections at 4 - 5 yearly intervals during school-life, to maintain the level of immunity.

SMALL POX VACCINATION

128 babies under the age of 1 year were vaccinated against Small Pox in the district during 1955. If the age of 4 months is taken as the optimum for this protection, then 128 represents approximately 55% of those eligible during the year. There is thus a slight improvement on the comparable figure of 53% for 1954, but not the marked improvement as shown in the Diphtheria Immunisation figures. Concern has recently been expressed by the Minister of Health at the current neglect of vaccination, and it is considered that for the adequate protection of the public against the epidemic spread of Small Pox, not fewer than 75% of babies should be vaccinated in the first year of life.

Under the County Council's scheme both small-pox vaccination and diphtheria immunisation can be provided by arrangement with a general practitioner or at any Child Welfare Centre.

TUBERCULOSIS

The number of cases on the Tuberculosis Register at the end of the year was as follows:-

<u>Respiratory</u>			<u>Non-Respiratory</u>		
<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
33	24	57	8	5	13

New Cases.

During the year 7 new cases of Tuberculosis were notified, 6 affecting the respiratory system and 1 being the non-respiratory form of the disease. In 1954 there were 10 new cases (9 respiratory and 1 non-respiratory).

Deaths.

There were no deaths from Tuberculosis in the district during 1955.

Mass Miniature Radiography.

On several days during the month of April, a Mobile Mass Miniature Radiography Unit from Wolverhampton was stationed at Bridgnorth Grammar School, and members of the public who wished it, were thus given the opportunity of having a chest X-ray. The Unit also visited several factories in Bridgnorth during working-hours, for the convenience of the workers.

921 people availed themselves of this opportunity (431 males and 490 females) and one case of active respiratory tuberculosis was detected among these. 6 inactive cases were noted, and 11 "other conditions" diagnosed (e.g. other chest and heart conditions etc.)

